

The godfather - sociological analysis essay examples

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



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Introduction

Introduction

The godfather is a world acclaimed film by the Francis Coppola. Based in 1940 New York, the film narrates the story of the Corleones, a crime family as it uplifts itself from a poverty to wield tremendous influence. The Corleones' life unfolds alongside four other Italian crime families as the struggle for dominion over the mob business. Michal Corleone's is forced to change from being a moral citizen and become a heartless murderer, because of protecting his family. Throughout this journey, various societal issues including the role of the family unit, struggle for power and crime are put under the spotlight.

Societal Issues Present

Crime is a theme that resonates throughout the three parts of The Godfather. A bandleader who has refused to cancel the contract with Don Vito's godson is forced to accept " an offer he can't refuse." The bandleader accepts the offer after Luca Brasi holds a gun to his head, forces him to

terminate the contract or die. Michael orders some hits on the heads of families that threaten their success him during his nephew's baptism.

Following his father's attempted assassination, Michael tricks Solozzo and McCluskey to make peace but kills them instead. Sonny enraged by Connie's mistreatment vows to avenge her, but since bodyguard does not accompany him is ambushed and killed.

The Corleones are a close knit family influence by hard work, discipline and devotion. Like any American family, they strive to achieve the American dream through the pursuit of happiness. Being a gangster family, the Corleons also strive to obtain money, power, and respect. Through the struggles of the Corleone family from poor immigrants to influential mobsters in America, the film marries itself to the not only the heritage of Italian immigrants but also that of other minorities. The strong familial relationship and ties to the Catholic Church are evident through the trilogy. Baptism, marriage, and funerals are reminiscent with practices of Italian-Americans in today's America.

The Godfather film has gone as far as influencing American language. It would not be uncommon to hear Americans utter phrases like " I'll make him an offer he can't refuse," and " It's not personal, it's strictly business." The monumental success of The Godfather has influenced the adaptation of other classics like Scarface, Goodfellas, and The Sopranos.

In The Godfather family is a multifaceted term. It not only involves the interaction between parent and sibling but also business dealings, mafia. It is not uncommon for normal family meetings to be punctuated with business discussions from time to time. Michael's love for his family and loyalty to his

father have a dual inclination. When he vows to take care of his father, Michael is not only trying to protect a member of his family but also maintain the businessman's influence. Michael receives information on Tessio's treason at his father's funeral. He also chooses Carlo and Connie's son's baptism as the opportune moment to eliminate the leaders of the rival crime families.

As much as The Godfather series is a work of fiction some of the issues it brings to the fore are commonplace. The representation of the Mafioso, an Italian Minority in New York is not far-fetched. Most minority groups the world over are perceived as being bitter and violent. Although this might be the construct of the media among other agents, generalization ought not to carry the day. The stereotyping of persons of some ethnicities based on fictional works has no basis. Thus, terming Italian immigrants as loyal family people and violent "businessmen" is wrong. To change public perception on ethnic based violence and discrimination movies, and other works of art should be taken with a pinch of salt.

People in leadership positions such as the police, senate, and even the clergy engage in corrupt deeds. Sergeant McCluskey doubles up as Sollozzo's bodyguard and is at the forefront in trafficking drugs. Senator Pat Geary approaches the Mafioso and exports bribes from them. He is also a regular customer of brothels. Gliday, who is an Archbishop and chairman of the Vatican bank, strikes deals with criminals. His iniquity even leads him to plan for the pope's assassination.

Leadership entails having influence over others. This is clearly shown through Don Vito's role in the film. Though his model of leadership is a

mainly authoritarian, it also has some streaks of aggressiveness and inclusivity. Throughout the movie his role is mostly that of dictating what is to be done instead of doing it himself. Vito is very decisive and looks for a win-win situation in every decision he makes. He goes to the extent of killing a family member to prove a point. In spite of being a good listener, he also involves his "consigliere" in every meeting. And when making decisions he distances himself from his emotions. Vito scolds his eldest son, Sonny, for acting impulsively by speaking with someone "outside the family." He also quips, "It's not personal, Sonny. It's strictly business" Lastly when dealing with people, Don Vito applies different strategies depending on what to expect. At one time he is respectful to Luca Bracci while he harasses the undertaker.

Deviance is among the main themes in The Godfather trilogy. And the cause of deviance is the lack of enough resources for everyone to achieve cultural goals. The Corleone family finds itself in this situation after immigrating to America. Due to these tensions the Corleones embrace gambling as a source of livelihood. And since the family views gambling as a less deviant behavior as compared to prostitution or dealing in drugs, they are indirectly linked to it. Maybe this is what waltzes in Sonny mind to make him speak out of line while brokering a deal with Solozzo. The Corleones also view their involvement in mob activities as reactionary. That their violence is aimed at solving conflict rather than initiating it. Michael, on of , to "." He fights to free it from its reliance on crime and immorality.

Although the Coleone family is bound by the strands of family and "business", this also turn out to be what fuels the familial conflict. The

inclusion of some family members in the business while others are left out creates the backdrop for disunity. Ties of loyalty, need for respect and revenge are not strong enough to prevent this family from falling apart. Don Vito murders a member of the family to maintain order. At the end of the movie film, Michael and Sonny are forced to take different paths. These internal struggles sow the seeds of deviance. The Corleone family direct dealings in gambling and indirect ones in drugs and prostitution also expose them to conflict. Don Vito, who views himself as a moral citizen, is quick to decline the involvement of his family in drug-related ventures. This stance strikes a blow on Solozzo who plans for Vito's assassination.

Gender Roles in the film are clearly spelled out. Most of the responsibility of managing a business is placed on the shoulders of men. This also goes for taking care of the family. Women and children are seen as inferior, and thus not capable of making hard decisions. Don Vito tells Michael that not only should he not discuss business matters with women for "Women and children can be careless. Not men." Vito also terms women as being carefree. In Part III of the trilogy, Connie joins the family business and but she is not given the same responsibility as that of the men.

Women in the film are viewed as objects to be used to satisfy men's egos. Apollonia is described as having "satiny skin" and blank only fit for Michael's pleasure. Michael disappears on his fiancé and returns after six months requesting for marriage. Kay is also forced to abandon her culture and class to marry into the mob. Lucy is portrayed as a seductress at Connie's wedding. Her lover also perceives her as loose because her previous relations while in college did not last long. This however is later noted to be

as a result of a medical condition affecting her pelvic floor.

In striving to remain relevant to contemporary society, The Godfather has not only made mention of terms used in roman tragedy but the characters are compared to ancient heroes. Hagen, vito's consigliere, and Pentangeli have an intimate discussion where there's mention of Roman Legion.

Pentangeli goes as far as to say " We was like the Roman Empire" when remembering his old days with the Corleone family. The hierarchy of the family is also comparable to that of Romans. Michael also mentions how the romans ruled their subject, and showed their opulence in the status they erected to his wife. Don Vito's relations with his son also borrows closely from Shakespeare's Lear, he is king while his sons are Princes. The Work relations in The Godfather is capitalistic in nature. The mafia makes use of manipulation, even going to the extent of murder to achieve these ends. The Mafiosos' involvement in gambling, prostitution and drug trafficking is evident. There is also a rise in corrupt dealing with the police, government and even the clergy. All this goes to prove that the stakeholders are in to grease their palms. Capitalism is at play so much so that it has threatened to break the family bond.

Conclusion

The greatest success of The Godfather series lies in its ability unite the past and the present. Apart from bringing the Italian and American cultures together, the film also unites ancient folklore with modern fiction. The roots of the American dream and concepts of capitalism and class struggle also arise. The film also continues to influence popular culture, the entertainment

industry and language. With such a plethora of societal issues that are ever more relevant in today's world, The Godfather retains the title of the best American classic.

Works Cited

The Godfather Screenplay by Mario Puzo and Francis Ford Coppola. Dir. Francis Ford Coppola. Perf. Marlon Brando, Al Pacino, and James Caan. Paramount Pictures, 1972.